

HCS SS SCS SB 718 -- MILITARY AFFAIRS

SPONSOR: White

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Veterans by a vote of 15 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for SB 718.

This bill has numerous provisions related to military affairs

#### DEAF AWARENESS MONTH

This bill designates the month of September as "Deaf Awareness Month" and the last week of September as "Deaf Awareness Week". Citizens are encouraged to commemorate the First World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf and increase awareness of deaf issues, people, and culture (Section 9.182).

This provision is similar to HB 1572 (2020).

#### MILITARY FAMILY MONTH

This bill designates November as "Military Family Month" in Missouri to recognize the daily sacrifices of military families (Section 9.297).

This provision is the same as HB 1328 (2020).

#### BUDDY CHECK 22 DAY

This bill designates the 22nd day of each month as "Buddy Check 22 Day" to encourage citizens check in on veterans and to raise awareness of the problem of suicide facing military personnel (Section 9.300).

#### GHOST ARMY RECOGNITION DAY

This bill designates June 6th as "Ghost Army Recognition Day" to commemorate the deception missions carried out by the "Ghost Army" that were essential to Allied success in Europe during World War II (Section 9.305).

This provision is similar to HB 1852 (2020)

#### MISSOURI KOREAN WAR VETERANS MEMORIAL

This bill designates the Missouri Korean War Veterans Memorial

located in Kansas City, Missouri as the official Korean War veterans memorial for the state of Missouri (Section 10.230).

This provision is similar to SB 656 (2020)

#### ATTORNEY GENERAL MILITARY PROGRAM

This bill requires the Attorney General to design, implement, and oversee a program to assist members of the military and their families in finding and retaining legal counsel. The program shall be marketed to attorneys in addition to military families and shall publicize pro bono legal services available to military families. The Attorney General shall collaborate with the Missouri Bar in the administration of the program and shall utilize existing staffs, volunteers, and programs. The Department of Defense and military facilities in Missouri are encouraged to promote this program. Additionally, any additional funds needed to implement this program shall be subject to appropriations (Section 27.115).

This provision is similar to a provision in HB 1316 (2020).

#### SURVIVING SPOUSES IN THE MERIT SYSTEM

This bill modifies the definition of "surviving spouse" in provisions of law relating to the merit system (Sections 36.020).

This provision is the same as HB 1566 (2020), SB 620 (2020), a provision in HCS SB 282 (2019) and in HB 461 (2019).

#### DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY FORCES

This bill creates the Department of Military Forces which shall be headed by the Adjutant General and shall administer the militia and programs of the state relating to military forces. The office of Adjutant General and the militia are transferred from the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Military Forces.

These provisions are contingent upon the passage of a constitutional amendment that provides for the establishment of the Department of Military Forces (Sections 41.035 and 650.005).

These provisions are the same as to SB 896 (2020).

#### TEACHER LICENSING FOR MILITARY SPOUSES

This bill provides that a provisional certificate issued to any qualified military spouse who is hired to teach in a Missouri public school is valid for three years. Additionally, within 30 days after receiving an application and of completion of the

required background check, the State Board of Education shall issue a full certificate of license to a spouse of a member of the Armed Forces who meets certain residence requirements if all necessary fees are paid and all other licensing requirements are met (Section 168.021).

This provision is similar to a provision in HB 1316 (2020).

#### STATE OMBUDSMAN & VETERANS' HOMES

This bill authorizes the Office of State Ombudsman for Long-Term Care Facility Residents to receive, respond to, and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of residents of Missouri veterans' homes relating to the action, inaction, or decisions of providers or agencies affecting resident health, safety, welfare, or rights. The State Ombudsman or representatives of the Office, in addition to all current authority granted by state statute, shall have the authority to enter any veterans' home and have access to residents in a reasonable time and manner and have access to resident records with the permission of the resident or the resident's guardian. Additionally, the office shall analyze and monitor the development and implementation of federal, state, and local law and regulations regarding Missouri veterans' homes (Section 192.2305).

This provision is the same as to SB 846 (2020).

#### DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

This bill provides that Missouri members of the Armed Forces and their immediate family shall have their eligibility for MO HealthNet developmental disability services temporarily suspended for any period of time during which such person temporarily resides outside of Missouri for reasons relating to military service. Upon returning to the state, the eligibility shall be immediately restored. If the military member or an immediate family member is not a legal resident of this state, but would otherwise be eligible for developmental disability services, the individual shall be eligible for such services during the time in which the individual is temporarily present in Missouri for reasons relating to military service (Section 208.151).

This provision is similar to a provision in HB 1316 (2020).

#### CHILD PROTECTION FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

This bill requires the Children's Division to attempt to ascertain whether the suspected perpetrator or any person responsible for the care, custody, and control of a child is a member of the Armed Forces after receiving a report on alleged abuse or neglect of a

child.

This bill allows appropriate staff of the United States Department of Defense to receive access to investigation records contained in the central registry of the Children's Division and records maintained by the Children's Division following a report of child abuse and neglect in cases where the suspected perpetrator or any person responsible for the care, custody, and control of the subject child is a member of the Armed Forces.

Additionally, this bill requires the division to report findings in cases where the person responsible for the care, custody, and control of a child is a member of the Armed Forces to the most relevant family advocacy program or other relevant person authorized by the United States Department of Defense to receive reports (Sections 210.109 and 210.150).

These provision is similar to provisions in HB 1316 (2020).

#### MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE

This bill requires the Adjutant General to ensure that members of the state military forces receive notice of certain protections relating to motor vehicle insurance, and encourages the secretaries of the branches of the United States Armed Forces to likewise notify members under their jurisdictions.

The bill specifically notes that the term "adverse underwriting decision" shall include a decision to charge an increased premium (Sections 379.122).

This provision is the same as SB 1036 (2020).

#### MISSOURI WORKS PROGRAM

This bill modifies the Missouri Works program to provided that, for qualified military projects, the benefit shall be based on part-time and full-time jobs created by the project (Section 620.2005).

This provision is the same as SB 1057 (2020).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill is intended to show appreciation and offer assistance for current and former military members and their families.

Testifying for the bill was Senator White.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.